THE

BRITISH GOVERNMENT

AND THE

IDOLATRY OF CEYLON.

BY R. SPENCE HARDY,

WESLEYAN MISSIONARY.

LONDON:
CROFTS AND BLENKARN, 19, CHANCERY LANE;
AND SOLD BY
J. MASON, 66, AND J. SNOW, 35, PATERNOSTER ROW;
ALSO BY H. BELLERBY, YORK.

1841.

LOAN STACK

G. Palmer, Printer, 4, Robert-street, Bedford-row, London.

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&c.

No person can visit the town of Kandy, the capital of the interior provinces of Ceylon, without being instantly struck by the proud attitude here assumed by idolatry; the principal temple being guarded at night, the period at which it is most usually visited, by a soldier wearing the uniform of our most gracious Queen; and the roll of the tomtom being heard at all hours, from the moment that the morning gun announces the approach of day, until the echo of its evening report has died away amid the gathering darkness of the night: and a residence in any part of the interior, cannot fail to present a continued series of similar facts, most distressing to the mind of the thoughtful Christian.

In calling the attention of the church to this topic, I am deeply impressed with the importance of the task I have undertaken, and I approach it under the impression that it is by far the most momentous question I have yet agitated, though I have recently endeavoured to direct the attention of the public to various subjects connected with the best interests of the island, in the pages of the "Friend."* Never indeed did I feel more keenly the necessity of that greatness of soul, which has frequently been manifested on kindred occasions, when, with an energy like that of the resistless torrent, the truth has swept away at once the corruptions it has assailed, bearing itself in majesty until its work was done, then changing into the gentle stream that cheers and refreshes all it can reach, and having no further hostility to the object of its attack, than to exhibit

* A Periodical published monthly for the Colombo Auxiliary Religious Tract Society.

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through its clear waters the fallen monuments it has buried beneath the surface, that other ages may look upon them and learn instruction. Generations to come may dive into the stream, and wonder at the unsightly form of the fragments they discover, but at present the proud front of the towering edifice, standing in all its strength and solidity, is presented to my view —Goliath of Gath, with his sword and spear, before David, the shepherd of Bethlehem.

It is acknowledged that instruction by example is the most powerful method of impressing the mind. Hence the value of biography and history, the one illustrating the character of the individual man, and the other pointing out the effect of the individual character as seen in its influence upon the mass, and connecting one successive result with another through many generations. The one is the single stone, the other the elaborate temple; as the temple is composed of many stones, so history is most commonly composed of many biographies—the aggregate is essentially of the same nature as the unit. Now I would suggest that in addition to these most important results, there is another kind of instruction which may be learnt from history, and which has little analogous in the experience of the individual. The temple has an æsthetical character, which the stone has not; and when various biographies are grouped into national compartments, and these are dovetailed into each other with a master's hand, history under this form has, in like manner, peculiar and important characteristics.

The philosophy of history has had of late years many able expositors, who have thrown life and power into the skeleton forms of the ancient chronicles, but I am waiting to see the broad page of universal history deeply and devoutly studied with reference to one single event, the salvation of the world through the redemption by Christ Jesus, with all the preparatory arrangements of divine providence, the peculiar advantages presented at "the fulness of time," and the subsequent agencies which have been set at work to accomplish its grand designs upon the human race. A sound judgment, a sober imagination, much acuteness of intellect, an extensive acquaintance with the ancient historians, and a thorough knowledge of sacred writ, both historical and prophetical, would be needful for the task; but with these requisites, it does not appear to me that it would

be presumption in man to attempt to discover the design of God in raising up one empire and subverting another, in bringing different nations under one government for a given period, then again parcelling out the same possessions to separate races of various and opposite character. The production of a few illustrative examples may not be inapplicable to the primary object of the present essay.

In the early civilization of Egypt, with the subsequent preservation of the imagery upon her solemn temples; the establishment of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan; the maritime prowess of Tyre and Sidon; and the poetry and philosophy of the Greeks; we can trace an intimate connexion with the grand end of revelation, but the limits to which I am confined will not allow me to illustrate this position. The Roman empire, however absurd such an idea may seem to the merely philosophic historian, appears to have been raised up expressly that an arena might be cleared for the more extended exhibition of the early triumphs of the cross, this great nation being no doubt rendered subservient to other important ends in the divine government of the world. It grew, and flourished, with accelerated increase, until its power was consolidated under the sway of Augustus Cæsar. In this reign Jesus Christ was born. Under the early emperors Rome presented a grandeur of dominion unparalleled in any previous age; this was the moment of its maturity; and as if to call the attention of men from their usual objects of attraction to the day-spring of "the Brightness of the Father's glory," there was comparative tranquillity during the ministry of the apostles throughout the whole of its extensive provinces. This mighty work being accomplished; the capital, the principal cities, multitudes of all classes, having received the message of reconciliation; the gospel having reached even to barbarous Britain;—from this very period is to be dated the commencement of the decline of the empire. Its final disruption was yet remote, but the power by which it had been raised to this pinnacle of greatness was from this date gradually withdrawn; it began to crumble piecemeal into ruin; and though many efforts were made from time to time to restore its beauty and strength, the attempt was vain, and the empire has passed away, leaving only the wreck of its former splendour in the city once named eternal. The separa-

tion of the Roman empire into its eastern and western divisions, the inroads of the barbarian hordes, the rise of the Mahomedan power, the crusades, the invention of printing, the reformation, the French revolution, the discovery of the power of steam—each of these circumstances, if rightly considered, would be seen to bear strongly upon the interests of the church; some of them would appear to have been permitted, and others perhaps ordained, to hasten the accomplishment of those events which are equally longed for in earth and heaven, by good men, by the spirits of the just, and by the seraph circles that encompass the Redeemer's throne.

There is now existent a mightier nation than that which worshipped in the Pantheon, and made its theatre of a hundred thousand spectators shout at the martyr's doom. Britain, where lived the people described by the Roman poet as "horribilesque ultimosque Britannos," once scarcely acknowledged as an integral portion of the world, "toto divisos orbe," is now the first of the nations in wealth, and power, and extent of influence. There is no nook of the ocean where her ships are not found; there is scarcely a nation among men by which her might is not acknowledged; and if we leave out China, she reigns immediately over one-eighth of the whole population of the world. Whence this power and vastness of dominion? Why have India, Burma, Ceylon, the fastnesses of southern Europe, many of the tribes of Africa, extensive tracts of country in New Holland, the Canadas, the fairest isles of the Western Indies, and numerous other places of no mean importance, been placed by God under the control of the British sceptre? We cannot doubt, if we judge only from the simple analogy of history, that success has attended our arms, and nations have been placed under our authority, that we might carry on with better effect the great work of the world's conversion, "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

The coincidence of the manner of God's working in the cabinet of the prince and the closet of the Christian is remarkable. Half a century previous to our own times the church, generally, was indifferent to the state of the heathen world. Millions after millions passed into a fearful eternity, and no efforts were made to save them from the worm that ever gnaws, and the fire that ever burns. The most animating promises had

been written in the word of God respecting the glory of the future generations of men, but they were forgotten, or if remembered, they were regarded with a want of confidence that to us appears utterly unaccountable. But if the case had been reversed, and the church had been as ready then as now with its means and men, to what part of the earth could its attention have been directed with the prospect of immediate success? The heathen nations of the world were then in the place of power, and banishment or the grave would have been the fate of the adventurous individual who might attempt to rouse the monster of superstition from his dream, though slumbering within the shadow of death. The banner of Britain then became triumphant in regions of which our forefathers had scarcely heard, and countries were added to our dominion with a rapidity that exceeded all human calculation. Then was afresh lit up—and it was in Britain too—the flame of Christian benevolence; the spirits of good men were stirred within them; with an increase of national influence arose the breath of prayer to heaven, that it might be exerted for the entire destruction of the empire of hell; men were willing to take their lives in their hands, and erect the standard of the cross in places that had never been previously cheered by its presence since the dawn of sin; missionary, tract, and bible associations were formed; and the havoc of war was quickly followed by the peaceful triumphs of the minister of Christ. Now, the glorious words, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," are re-echoed from almost every voice in the mighty phalanx that has started up at the gathering for the cross, and the world responds to the divine command. It is open, with scarcely an exception, to the efforts of the man of God, "none daring to make him afraid."

It is in India principally that the influence of Britain bids fair to be productive of the most important results. Upon the continent we are in contact with Braminism, a system which carries the sweep of its fell existence through more than 3000 years; in Burma and Ceylon we are equally in juxta-position with Budhism, the most wide-spread religion of any age; and in Arabia and our recent conquests towards Persia, the warriors of the false prophet are succumbing to victorious troops led on by British valour. The end of these things cannot now be foreseen.

It is possible that our armies are to make way for the downfall of Mahomedanism, in equal ratio with the preparatory inroads they have made upon the more ancient forms of error. The destinies of the three great superstitions of mankind have thus been placed by God in our hand, and who can doubt that all this has been brought about, in order that their destruction may be accelerated, and the blessings of the Truth be diffused in their stead.

It therefore becomes a matter of very serious importance, and one in which we are individually concerned, to enquire whether our authorities in the east are carrying into effect the intention for which they have been raised by God to their present anomalous position. At the commencement of the missionary career the aspect of affairs in India was most melancholy. It had been spread far and wide that the Hindoo, gentle in manner and plausible in speech, was a purer being than his Christian conqueror; and it was held that there was no necessity to teach him to be a better man. Missionaries were not allowed to locate in India, and men of some pretensions to judgment asserted that any attempt to convert the natives would be followed by the loss of our possessions. The facts of the case have since been proved to be the very reverse of that which was proclaimed with so much pertinacity, and it is now too well known to be contradicted, that a baser, more bloody, and more licentious system than Braminism never cursed the fair creation of God. It will scarcely be credited in future times that this most wretched system was supported by the British Government, that a gain was made of its wickedness, and that the price of deathless souls found its way into the treasure chest of the East India Company. But the history of these evils is too long to be here told. It may suffice to say, that the voice of the church has cried out against them, and been heard; and though there is yet much over which we have to mourn, a great victory has been achieved in procuring from the court at Leadenhall Street, the despatch of Aug. 8, 1838, addressed to the Governor-General. It contains the following paragraph:—

"3. We have again to express our anxious desire that you should accomplish with as little delay as may be practicable, the arrangements which we believe to be already in progress for abolishing the pilgrim-tax, and for discontinuing the connexion

of the Government with *the management of all funds* which may be assigned for the support of religious institutions in India. We more particularly desire that *the management of all temples* and other places of religious resort, together with the revenues derived therefrom, be resigned into the hands of the natives; and that *the interference of the public authorities in the religious ceremonies of the people* be regulated by the instructions conveyed in the 62nd paragraph of our despatch of 20th Feb. 1833."

It has been ascertained from the recent pilgrims to Juggernaut that some of these directions are not yet attended to, but though the full accomplishment of the instructions has been delayed, they cannot long be disregarded; the church is too vigilant and too powerful to brook deception, without continued efforts at its exposure. We may thank God at the prospects before us upon the continent of India, and take courage.—But it is time that we arrive at that which now more immediately concerns us, the Government of Ceylon as connected with the interests of Christianity.

The national religion of Ceylon is Budhism, accompanied by the worship of demons, and the propitiation of malignant infernal spirits. Budhism is professed in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, by the populace of China and Japan, and with some modifications in Tibet. In India, the seat of its origin, and where it was once predominant, as is testified by the monuments yet existent throughout every part of the peninsula, it is now nearly unknown, except as seen in the comparatively small sect of the Jains and in Nepal. It would be foreign to my present purpose to enter into an examination of its dogmas. I rest my argument for the necessity of its destruction upon the simple fact that it is opposed to the truth—denies the existence of God—is ignorant of the only way of salvation, by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ—and is utterly impotent as a teacher of morals, or as a messenger of peace to the awakened consciences of its deluded votaries. In the sacred scriptures all these errors are summed up in one word, Idolatry. The religion of Budha is idolatrous, and I contend that it is the bounden duty of the Government of the country, from its possession of the Truth, to discountenance the system by every legitimate means; and that it can afford no open or implied encouragement to its teachers or its worship,

without the commission of an offence in the sight of God. I also contend that the government of Ceylon is guilty in this particular—that there is an unnatural, sinful, and pernicious connexion between the British Government of Ceylon and idolatry. This most serious charge is founded upon the proofs I shall now adduce. I pledge myself to have made every possible effort to arrive at certainty in the facts I bring forward, and though I may possibly be mistaken in a few minor particulars, as we must ever be in some measure distrustful of information gathered in a heathen land, I have every reason to believe that in my principal assertions I am strictly correct. It is perhaps right also I should notice, that my information is in no instance official.

The Portuguese, in Ceylon, as in other places conquered by their arms, set themselves in stern opposition against heathenism, absolutely forbidding the exercise of its rites within their dominions. The Dutch tolerated heathenism, but raised to offices of trust and authority only those natives who professed the Protestant religion. The English, on taking possession of the ceded territories, in 1796, had therefore no excuse to interfere in the internal management of the temples, and I believe the appointment of the Maha Nāyaka, or chief priest, in each of the districts, is the only positive countenance of Budism by the government in the maritime provinces. When the chief priest was last appointed in the Matura district, the office was given by the British collector to the individual who had the greatest number of the votes of his brethren. The northern province is inhabited by Malabars, who of course profess Braminism, but I am told there is no government interference with their worship; and the same may be said of the Moors, who are scattered, often in villages of their own, through the whole of the island, and profess Mahomedanism.

A proclamation by the Governor, given at Colombo, September 23, 1799, contains the following clauses:—

"And it is his Majesty's will and pleasure that we should execute, and we do therefore hereby publish and declare, that we will execute the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and the office commonly called the office of the ordinary, inasmuch as relates to the collation of benefices, the granting of licenses for marriages, and probates of will.

"And we do hereby allow liberty of conscience, and the free

exercise of religious worship, to all persons who inhabit and frequent the said settlement of the island of Ceylon, provided always that they quietly and peaceably enjoy the same without offence or scandal to Government; but we command and ordain that no new place of religious worship be established without our license or authority first had and obtained.

"And we do hereby command that no person shall be allowed to keep a school in any part of the said settlements of Ceylon, without our license first had and obtained, in granting which we shall pay most particular attention to the morals and proper qualifications of the persons applying for the same."

This mark ‡ is attached to the two last paragraphs I have quoted, and it is said in a note to the Proclamation:—"N. B. The clauses which still apply to existing establishments are marked ‡." The work from which I have copied these paragraphs was printed in 1821, and as I am not aware that the regulations in question have since been repealed, it is not lawful at the present moment to commence a school without permission from Government. They are not acted upon, but so long as they remain among the legal enactments of the island, they are liable to be made the cause of trouble and annoyance by persons who are evil disposed towards religion or instruction, and as such ought to be blotted from our statutes.

In consequence of the erection of two bana maduwas near a Government school, an extract from the above Proclamation was issued, Nov. 10, 1814, and it was further declared:—

"Comformably to this ordinance it will be the duty of persons desiring to erect a new place of worship to address a petition for that purpose to His Excellency the Governor, and no public preparations are to be made or permitted for the intended purpose, until the authority of Government to that effect be communicated to the proper department officially and in writing."

The grant of a license by the Government for the practice of any heathen ceremony has this pernicious effect, that it appears to sanction what it only tolerates; and as the natives generally are not able to distinguish between the one and the other, this is an additional reason why the enactment should be repealed.

Certain restraints having been placed upon the Roman Catholics by the Dutch Government, by which they were excluded from "many important privileges and capacities," a Regulation

of Government was issued, May 27, 1806, in which it is declared :—

"The Governor in Council enacts as follows:

"First. The Roman Catholics shall be allowed the unmolested profession and exercise of their religion in every part of the British Settlements on the island of Ceylon.

"Second. They shall be admitted to all civil privileges and capacities."

In 1815, a Regulation was passed, "For facilitating the marriages of native Protestants," but I forbear to dwell upon the anomalies at present existing upon this subject, as I would hope that the privileges already enjoyed in England, as well as in all the British Crown Colonies, will in a little time be granted in Ceylon.

In 1817, a Regulation was issued, "For enforcing the observance of the Sabbath-day," by which it was enacted "that every person who shall expose articles of any description for sale in any bazaar, street, or public place, between the hours of 8 and 12 in the morning of Sunday, Christmas Day, or Good Friday, shall, upon conviction hereof, be fined in a penalty not exceeding one rix-dollar for every such offence." This enactment has taught the natives to imagine, that the prohibited hours are the whole of the Sabbath, and that during the rest of the day they are permitted by God, as well as man, to follow their ordinary occupations. The necessity for some more comprehensive regulation is every day becoming more apparent. In the interior, the coolies employed upon the coffee plantations are generally not required to work on Sunday, and the consequence is, that they take this opportunity of coming to the bazaars to make their purchases, and the bazaar in Kandy is more numerously attended upon the holy Sabbath of God than on any other day of the week. I am happy to hear that this circumstance has already attracted the attention of the proper authorities.

These are the principal Regulations which affect the interests of Christianity, or of religion generally, that were passed previously to our possession of the interior of Ceylon, by the Colonial Government; and with this brief notice I hasten to that which must be considered as the gist of the question at issue, the connexion of the British Government with the heathenism of the Kandyan provinces.

The interior of the island fell into our hands under circumstances widely different from those which attended our acquisition of the coast. Roused by the attrocities which were constantly committed by the reigning king, Rāja Singha, the British authorities, at that time in possession only of the maritime provinces, resolved upon his deposition, and the subjugation of his country. These atrocities were of the most appalling description, almost more than human, as set forth in the "Official Declaration on the Settlement of the Kandyan provinces." In 1806, 150 British soldiers were murdered in the hospital of Kandy, left under the pledge of public faith, and at the same time the whole British garrison was massacred, commanded by Major Davie, which had surrendered on a promise of safety. Ten British subjects were afterwards most barbarously mutilated, in consequence of which eight of them lost their lives. In 1814, the tragedy was completed by a scene too dreadful to be dwelt upon in detail. "In the deplorable fate of the wife and children of Eheylepola Adigar. . . . was exhibited the savage scene of four infant children, the youngest torn from the mother's breast, cruelly butchered, and their heads bruised in a mortar by the hands of their parent, succeeded by the execution of the woman herself, and three females more; whose limbs being bound, and a heavy stone tied round the neck of each, they were thrown into a lake and drowned." In the language of the same authority, "led by the invitation of the chiefs, and welcomed by the acclamations of the people, the forces of His Britannic Majesty entered the Kandyan territory." War was proclaimed on the 10th Jan. 1815, the British head-quarters were established in Kandy, Feb. 14, and on the 18th of the same month the King was taken prisoner.

From that time the British Government has exerted the same authority in religious matters as was previously exercised by the Kandyan king.

1. The principal priests of the interior are appointed by the Right Honorable the Governor, and hold their offices *bene placito.*

In Kandy there are two separate fraternities of Budhist priests, known by the name of the Malwatta and Asgiri establishments. They have equal authority, profess exactly the same doctrines, and are bound by the same canons. Nearly

all the priests in Ceylon belong to one or other of these establishments, though not in equal proportions, the Malwatta being more ancient, and having a greater number of temples under its authority. There appears likewise to be a territorial division of the island, the Malwatta having authority over the temples towards the south of Kandy, and the Asgiri over those towards the north.

Until the year 1832, the natives generally were liable to be appointed by the Government to compulsory labour. This was in consequence of an ancient usage of the island, by which certain personal services were considered as due to the crown, in addition to the money which was paid to the king as rent, or the grain which was more commonly given for the same purpose in kind. After an insurrection, in 1818, when the country was settled upon the terms still in some measure acknowledged, though a rent of one-tenth of the produce was levied in kind, the claim of government upon the gratuitous services of the people was relinquished, but they were still liable to be called out on receiving a compensation for their labour, at an established rate. They were also futher required, as in former times, to perform gratuitously such services as the making of roads, the putting up of bridges, and keeping them in repair.

Though the crown was considered to have been originally the sole possessor of the soil, there were, in all times of which we have any statistical account, extensive lands belonging to private individuals and to the priesthood. The temple lands were principally royal donatives, but not in every instance. It is not very clear how lands came into the possession of private individuals, so as to be alienable, but we may infer that they were originally granted by the kings for some signal service performed, and that the families thus rewarded afterwards falling into decay, found themselves obliged to look out for some more powerful protection. They might either become retainers to the crown or to the church; but as the temple service was nearer their own homes, was less arbitrary and oppressive, and had moreover the recommendation that by this means they might benefit their souls, it was natural that they should dedicate their lands to the priest, rather than to the king. Lands that were newly cleared might also be considered

as liable to no compulsory custom, and from a similar motive, to ensure protection, would be given over to the temple; and in return for the protection received, certain services would be promised on the part of the individual who presented the gift. We have many parallel instances of the transmission of property in the history of the feudal times. When lands were dedicated by the king, the services that were to be rendered by the cultivator of the soil were very minutely set forth, as is testified by many inscriptions still to be traced upon slabs of stone, and occasionally in the solid rocks, near the temple to which the lands were given.

The temple lands were invariably free from royal custom or duty, the services which in the royal villages were paid to the king being here paid to the temple. This system was very ancient, some of the grants being nearly as old as the time of Christ. An extract from Robert Knox will illustrate the usages as they prevailed during his captivity, which commenced in the year 1659:—

"Unto each of the pagodas there are great revenues of land belonging: which have been allotted to them by former kings, according to the state of the kingdom: but they have much impaired the revenues of the crown, there being rather more towns belonging to the church than unto the king. These estates of the temples are to supply a daily charge they are at; which is to prepare victuals or sacrifices to set before the idols. They have elephants also, as the king has, which serve them for state. Their temples have all sorts of officers belonging to them, as the palace hath. . . .

"Many of the vehars are endowed and have farms belonging to them. The tirinanxes (the higher order of priests) are the landlords, unto whom the tenants come at a certain time, and pay in their rents. These farmers live the easiest of any people in the land, for they have nothing to do but at these set times to bring in their dues and so depart, and to keep in repair certain little vehars in the country. So that the rest of the Chingulais envy them and say of them, though they live easy in this world, they cannot escape unpunished in the life to come, for enjoying the Buddou's land and doing him so little service for it. . . .

"These officers (collectors of the revenue, whether in money

or kind,) can exercise their authority throughout the whole division over which they are constituted, excepting some certain towns, that are exempt of jurisdiction. And they are of two sorts. First, such towns as belong to the idol temples and priests, having been given and bestowed on them long ago by former kings. And, secondly, the towns which the king allots to his noblemen and servants. Over these towns thus given away neither the fore-mentioned officers, nor the chief magistrate himself hath any power. But those to whom they are given and do belong to, do put in their own officers, who serve to the same purposes as the abovesaid do."

All the privileges granted in former times to the temples, and then in actual observance, were continued to the priests on the accession of the British government. The Proclamation issued by Sir Robert Brownrigg, Nov. 21, 1818, contains the following clause:—

"21. The Governor, desirous of showing the adherence of government to its stipulations in favour of the religion of the people, exempts all lands which are now the property of temples, from all taxation whatever; but as certain inhabitants of those villages are liable to perform fixed gratuitous services also to the crown, this obligation is to continue unaffected."

In the same year, another Proclamation was issued, forbidding the people to dedicate lands to the priests, lest by this means they should endeavour to release themselves from government services and contributions. I am told that this law is not always attended to; perhaps in consequence of the different tenure upon which lands are now held, it is not thought to be of the same importance as when originally promulgated, though the injurious tendency of the evasion must be evident.

In a Proclamation given at Kornegalle, Sept. 18, 1819, still further to secure the interests of the Government, it was enacted that all lands which were the property of temples on the 21st Nov. 1818, should be enregistered as such within twelve months, and a certificate thereof be obtained, which certificate was to be the sole proof of the land being exempt from taxation. The term of registry was afterwards extended to Sept. 1st, 1822, as doubts were entertained respecting the construction of the former Proclamation.

On the abolition of compulsory labour by an Order of the

King in Council no change whatever was made in the tenure of the temple lands, the same rights being at present valid, and the same services due. The temple lands are still free from all tax, with the exception of some trifling services, which were also required from them under the Kandyan kings. The office of priest is therefore frequently connected with great influence and emolument, excites ambition, and is the object of intrigue. The priest cannot marry, nor can he legally make away with the property of the temple to others; but though he can have no family of his own he may have relatives whom he can assist; and it would appear that in this way the revenues of many of the temples are scattered, as they are known to be rich in lands, and yet the sacred buildings are on every hand allowed to fall into ruin, few efforts being made to prevent their destruction. These practices are murmured against by the people, and they tend to bring the priesthood into great disrepute.

The following offices, in the Central Province, are in the gift of the Government, and the persons who hold them receive a warrant of office under the sign manual of His Excellency the Governor, as the representative of Her Majesty. The Maha Nāyaka is the arch-priest; the Anu Nāyaka, his deputy, and generally his successor; and the Nāyaka answers in some respects to the abbot of the Roman Catholic church, having a certain jurisdiction over all the priests in the district, as well as over those in his own establishment.

THE MALWATTA ESTABLISHMENT.

The Maha Nāyaka.
The Anu Nāyaka.
The second Anu Nāyaka.
The Nāyaka of Gangārāmē.
do. Walgampāyē.
do. Deldeniyē.
do. Hingulē.
The Nāyaka of Welēgoda.
do. Dewanagala.
do. Anurādhapura.
do. The Peak.
do. Alut Nuwera.
do. Dippitiya.

THE ASGIRI ESTABLISHMENT.

The Maha Nāyaka.
The Anu Nāyaka.
The Nāyaka of Dambulla.
do. Bambā.
The Nāyaka of Mūtiyangana.
do. Myhangana.
do. Hunduhampala.

II. The priests of the palace in Kandy are confirmed in their appointments by the British Government.

The ancient palace of the Kandyan kings has been converted into various uses by their successors in power. The pattrippo, the most imposing remain, is now used as a prison for the European soldiers. The hall of audience, where the ambassadors were received, serves the double purpose of a court of justice on the week-day, and of a church on the Sabbath. In a long suite of apartments, once appropriated to the ladies of the royal household, resides the Honorable the Agent for the Central Province. Many of the old offices have been pulled down, and their remains cleared away, so that the buildings I have mentioned are now detached from each other.

The royal temple retains its former appropriation, and is still called the Mālagāwa, or palace, by the natives. It is a place of no great magnificence, but in the centre of the interior court is a pagoda of two stories, in which is kept the Daladā relic, said to be a tooth of Budha. From its being the receptacle of this inestimable treasure, the Mālagāwa is venerated more than any other spot in the world, by many of the natives, and is frequented by great numbers at the principal festivals. The relic is in the official custody of the Government Agent, the keys of the room in which it is kept are lodged at his house, and the key of the karanduwa in which the relic is immediately deposited is also in his possession. For the purpose of opening and closing the temple, and other temple services exclusively, an arachy is appointed by the Agent, who receives from the Government a monthly allowance of thirty shillings, and is called the arachy of the Mālagāwa. In May, 1828, there was a Daladā festival, and the agent of the Interior, at the time, has expressly said, "the superintendance of that ceremonial officially devolved upon me." The contributions amounted to 10,000 rix-dollars, about £750, which were received into the cutcherry, to be appropriated to the embellishment of the temple. This money is given out at interest in various sums, the business connected with its transfer being conducted at the cutcherry by the clerks of the Government.

The services of the temple are conducted by 40 priests, 20 of whom belong to the Malwatta, and 20 to the Asgiri. Two priests are constantly in attendance, one year from the Malwatta,

and the next from the Asgiri, alternately. These priests are appointed by the Maha Nāyakas of the respective establishments, but must be confirmed in their office by the Agent of Government. From six in the evening to the same hour in the morning, a soldier, in his regular uniform, belonging to the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, which is composed principally of Malays and officered by Europeans, mounts guard in the lower court of the temple. The Mālagāwa contains various articles of considerable value, such as books written upon leaves of solid gold, the intrinsic worth of one of which cannot be less than £2000 sterling. On a recent occasion, when these treasures were privately exhibited, one of the priests was heard to declare, that as they were the property of Government, it was right that the Government should protect them; and he argued that the Government was bound to maintain their religion, from the simple fact of its retention of these sacred treasures.

The nature of the Government interference with the Budhist priests of the two principal establishments, as well as with the priests of the Mālagāwa, and those called "stipended," may be inferred from the evidence given by the Honorable the Agent of the Central Province, at the "Trial of the Kandyan State Prisoners," as reported in the Government Gazette. The prisoners, who were charged with insurrection and rebellion, were:—"Moligode, late first Adigar; Dunuwilla, late Dessawe; Dembewa Unnanse; Tibbotawewe Unnanse; Kettakumbere Unnanse; and Bambaradenia, late Basnaika Ralla." The trial took place before the Hon. W. Norris, Second Puisne Justice (now Sir W. Norris, Recorder of Penang), commencing Jan. 12th, 1835; and after a minute investigation which ended on the 19th, the Jury returned a verdict of "Not guilty."

"*Mr. Turnour, Government Agent.*—I know Mahalle and Ratnapalla Unnanse, (witnesses for the crown) the former is a stipended priest, the latter is his pupil. Formerly stipended priests were selected by the Resident, then by the Board, and after the abolition of the Board, by me. The selection is made both from the respectability of their characters and their sacerdotal qualifications. If any complaint had been preferred against them, it would of course be investigated, but I know of none against either. Mahalle was made a stipended priest by the late Sir John D'Oyly, in 1823, and as far as I have had an oppor-

tunity of judging, he has always been looked up to for respectability and acquirements. I have formed this opinion, rather from the estimation in which he had been held by the principal priests and chiefs, than from my own observation. Certain charges had long been preferred, and remained uninvestigated, against the high priest, who died the night before last, and it became at last necessary to appoint a court of enquiry. The court was to consist of 15 priests and 7 chiefs. . . .

"Wattegedere Annu Nāyke Unnanse was, I always thought, a priest of great respectability, until lately, when he was dismissed after trial before Council for having threatened to degrade Mahalle and Ratnapalla Unnanses for giving information of this conspiracy to government."

In a statement made by the first Adigar when in confinement, before Mr. Anstruther and Mr. Turnour, is the following sentence :—" On Thursday last the Maha Nāyke Unnanse and the other principal priests called on deponent; they talked of the petition to Government regarding the ordination of Upasampada, and the circumstance of their not being allowed by Mr. Turnour to take their turn of duty at the Mālagāwa."

The Anu Nāyaka above referred to, said in his evidence, which he gave in favor of the prisoners :—" Mahalle and Ratnapalla calumniated me, and got me dismissed from my office, also from a temple village which I had got from Government, and have also got me deprived of my monthly allowance and yearly allowance of robes which I have received from the king's time, and also of my turn at the Mālagāwa. I was examined before Council, cannot recollect it at full length. I have only heard of others being examined."

It is thus evident that the cognizance of Government extends to the chief priest—that the 2nd chief priest was dismissed from office "after trial before Council," which Council is composed entirely of Europeans—that there are stipended priests—that these stipended priests are selected by the British Agent—that the Agent passes his judgment on their "sacerdotal qualifications,"—and that the Agent can likewise interfere with the appointment of the priests in taking their "turn of duty at the Mālagāwa"—a temple devoted to the worship of Budha.

There were other circumstances that came out in evidence, which I refer to with the greater pleasure, as it affords me the

opportunity of presenting the acts of the Government in a more favorable light than I have hitherto had the power of doing. One grievance complained of by the chiefs was, that the Government interfered in their religion. This interference, however, was proved to be nothing further, than that the Government refused to compel the attendance of the people at the festivals. "Never," said the judge in summing up, "was a more extravagant complaint put forth. We refuse any longer to be parties to the monstrous absurdity of compelling the attendance of the people at the religious festivals, and this, by a strange perversion of language, is called interference." The compulsory attendance extends now only to the retainers of the temple, but this is a subject I must notice in another place.

III. The Basnaika Nilamas, or lay chiefs of the principal dēwālas are appointed by the British Government.

The temples of Budha are called wihāras, but in addition to these there are numerous dēwālas, where the Hindoo gods are worshipped, the most popular of whom is Katragama dewiyō, the Kartikeya of the Bramins, one of whose temples, situated in the province of Uwa, is frequented by pilgrims from the most remote parts of India. The dēwālas have lands attached to them, in the same way as the Budhist temples. These lands are equally exempt from the payment of all dues to the Government, are held upon the same tenure, and the chiefs can demand the same services from their retainers. In Kandy there are 4 dēwālas, dedicated to Maha Vishnu, Natha, Pattinee, and Kartikeya. In some parts of the island these Hindoo temples exhibit a greater splendor, and exercise a greater influence, than the pansals of the Budhist priests. I am speaking now of those dēwālas only that have lands belonging to them, there being smaller buildings appropriated to the same purpose in almost every village of the interior, and attached to nearly all the Budhist temples. In some instances, as at Lankātilaka, the wihāra and dēwāla are under the same roof.

The priests of this order, called kapuwas, may marry. They are not distinguished by any particular dress, and although they must be of good family, they do not receive the same marks of respect from the people that are paid to the Budhist priests. Europeans are not allowed to enter their sacred edifices, and the exact nature of the rites they perform is not known. In the

sanctum are the halamba of Pattinee, or the weapons of the other deities, with a painted screen before them, but there are no images, at least none that are permanently placed; in some of the ceremonies, temporary images are made of rice, or other materials. There are instances in which the office is held by females. Temporary erections are frequently made near the houses of the people in cases of sickness, in which the kapuwa invokes his god, chanting and dancing to the sound of the tom-tom. The invocations are all in the Sanscrit language, and are not understood by the kapuwas, who repeat them merely from memory.

The Nilama is the organ of communication between the Government and the dēwāla; he appoints the people to the services they are required to perform; takes charge of the money presented at the shrine; and keeps the buildings in repair. The warrant of appointment to this office is given by the Agent of Government, and not, as in the case of the Nāyakas, by His Excellency the Governor. The names of the kapuwas, when appointed to office by the Nilamas, are mentioned to the Government Agent, whose approbation is necessary to confirm them in their situation. The Agent does not usually interfere in their appointment, but in cases of contumacy, upon the petition of the people, he displaces the offender, and chooses another kapuwa in his stead.

At several of the outstation dēwālas there are annual peraharas, or processions, the necessary preparations for which are made by the people as duty or service for the lands they are permitted to hold of the temple. The attendance at the various ceremonies is called rājakaria, government service. When the accustomed services for the god are not properly paid, a representation is made on the subject to the Government Agent, and by British authority the disobedient retainer is dispossessed of the lands he held, and one that will be more zealous for heathenism enters upon the forfeited privilege.

A list of the Basnaika Nilamas is published annually, and I extract the names as they are printed in the Ceylon Almanac for 1839. The Diwa Nilama holds his office in connexion with Budhism, but all the others are attached to the worship of the Hindoo deities.

PRINCIPALS OF THE TEMPLES.—CENTRAL PROVINCE.

Diwa Nilama, principal of the temple Daladā Malagawa.
Basnaika Nilama of Maha Vishnu Dēwāla.
do. Nātha.
do. Kattragama.
do. Pattinee.
do. Maha Dēwāla, Hangurankata.
do. Wallāhagoda, Udapalāta.
Basnaika Nilama of Ganagoda, do.
do. Lankātillaka, Udanuwara.
do. Embekka, do.
do. Wēgiriya, do.
do. Dodanwala.
do. Pasgama.

BADULLA.

Basnaika Nilama of Maha Kattragama Dēwāla.
do. Horaguna.
Basnaika Nilama of Saman.

MATALA.

Basnaika Nilama of Embekka.

MADAWELETENA.

Basnaika Nilama of Alawatūgoda.

WESTERN PROVINCE.—SEVEN KORLAS.

Basnaika Nilama of Wilbawa.
do. Jangura.
do. Kandawala.
Basnaika Nilama of Kirindagala.
do. Gonawa.

SOUTHERN PROVINCE.—RATNAPURA.

Basnaika Nilama of Maha Saman Dēwāla.
do. Alut Nuwara.

ALIPUT.

Basnaika Nilama of Kattragama.

IV. The British Government grants a monthly allowance for the support of Budhist priests.

There are 42 priests who are "stipended" by the Government. The two Maha Nāyakas receive each a monthly allowance of seven shillings and sixpence. The two priests who officiate at the Mālagawa receive a monthly allowance from the cutcherry of three shillings each, together with four parrahs of paddy. The others receive an allowance of paddy, in various proportions, from seven parrahs and a half to three and three quarters each. They also receive from the Government a

monthly allowance for salt and oil. The whole of this expenditure, with the allowance to the outstation temples, may amount to about £150 per annum, but of this I speak with some hesitation.

Under this head ought also to be included the loss to the Government by the remission of the one-tenth upon the produce of the temple lands, which, if my information be at all correct, cannot amount to less than 22,000 parrahs of paddy annually; and if the parrah be reckoned at the value of one shilling, the amount sterling is upwards of one thousand pounds. This calculation does not include the important districts of Saffragam, the Seven Korlas, the Three Korlas, and Uwa. About these districts I am unable to procure any information, but I am aware from my own personal knowledge, that a great portion of the cultivated land of Saffragam, including some of the richest tracts in the interior, belongs to the priests. Assuming the correctness of these premises, the loss to the Government by the remission of the usual tax upon the temple produce, must amount to more than twelve hundred pounds sterling per annum. But upon these things I lay no stress; whether I am here right or wrong makes no difference in my main argument; it is not with the negative but the positive acts of Government that I contend. With political errors I have no controversy.

By the continuance of so great an extent of territory under the sole control of the priests, as the progress of improvement, in many different ways that must present themselves at once to the thinking mind, is hindered, there is a virtual loss, not only to the treasury of the Government, but to the whole social compact.

V. The Perahara of Kandy is principally got up at the expense, and by the command, of the British Government.

An account of the Perahara will be found in the Appendix, extracted from the Friend, for Sept. 1839. The proper time for commencing this festival having been ascertained, an announcement to this effect is made by beat of tomtom, at the command of the Agent for the Central Province, and persons who are desirous to contract for the supply of the articles required in the getting up of the pageant are directed to send in their estimates to the cutcherry. The following is a copy of the bill sent

in to the Government, which was paid as usual, for the expenses attending the Perahara of the present year.

	£	s.	d.
" For the cost of sundry Articles for the use of the Mālāgawa and 4 Dēwālas since the procession....	3	10	6
" For Devil Dancing, called Walliyakoon............	3	13	2½
" For 13 Outstation Dēwālas	4	5	1
" For carrying the Canopy over the Karanduwa	0	16	0
" For oil and rags..................................	3	15	0
	£15	19	9½

The chiefs are required by the Government Agent to attend and render the accustomed service, the order being conveyed by a government peon; and when the summons is not obeyed, as in the case of the ratēmahatmayā of Udanuwera this year, who pleaded sickness, a message is sent by the Agent enquiring why the chief was not present on the occasion. The chiefs are accompanied during the procession by government constables, that the people may be compelled to leave the way clear for their progress, and pay them proper respect. "The oil and rags" mentioned in the account are to supply the lights that are carried during the passage of the procession through the streets.

The 13 outstation Peraharas are also got up under the direction of the Government, and persons neglecting to afford the usual service are deprived of their lands in consequence by the Government Agent.

There is an annual Perahara at Dondra, near Matura, but as there are some further enquiries that I wish to make on the subject, I must place this account also in the Appendix.

VI. The British Government is at the expense of other Festivals, both Budhist and Braminical.

From ancient times the Kandyan monarchs encouraged certain festivals, the principal of which were held near the palace. They have been continued by our own Government. The expenses paid by the Government for the present year, and there may be others of which I have not been able to procure any account, are contained in the following enumeration :—

	£	s.	d.
The Awurudha Festival	5	10	6
The Nānamura Festival	6	19	2¾
The 5 Wahāla Pinkamas	25	4	0½
The Katina Pinkama	43	13	8¼
The Kārtiya Festival	5	11	8½
The Alut Sāl Festival	11	7	5¼
The Waliyakoon	4	1	1

A brief account of each festival may not be without interest, and the detail will illustrate still further the nature of the patronage bestowed by the Government upon the heathen superstitions of Ceylon.

1. The Awurudha Festival.—This festival, as its name implies, is held on the 1st day of the year, when the sun enters Mēsha, or Aries, which in the present year was on the 21st of March. It is supposed to be a point of the utmost importance to ascertain the exact moment when the ceremonies are to commence, as upon this is said to depend the prosperity of the year; and in the respect which is paid by the Government to the calculations of the Astrologer, encouragement is given to one of the most pernicious errors prevalent among the natives of this island. The principal Astrologer of the present day is Malabar, but there are both Singhalese and Kandyans who are supposed to be able to make the same calculations. It is a state pageant, as well as a religious festival, but is connected as I have said, with some of the greatest absurdities of Astrology in its preparation. Under the Kandyan Government, the inferior chiefs were at this period re-instated in office, on the payment of a fine, which custom was in some places kept up long after we had obtained possession of the interior, without the knowledge of the authorities, but I have heard no complaints upon this subject in recent times.

2. The Nānamura Festival.—The ceremonies of this festival take place at the time when, according to the calculation of the Astrologer, it will be fortunate to bathe for the first time after the commencement of the year.

3. The five Wahala Pinkamas.—The word *pin* means religious merit, or virtue acquired by a course of moral action. It is usually applied by the natives to charity, or almsgiving. According to the Budhist system, all events are the consequence of kusala or akusala, merit or demerit; events proceeding naturally from these causes, as heat from fire, or the tree from the seed. Kusala, or *pin*, is good,—akusala evil, in a moral or religious sense. "Quod licitum vel mandatum; quod illicitum, vel prohibitum." All things proceed from the associated energy or power produced by moral action. Thus, "by the united virtue of all creatures," the world is said to have been produced, according to its present constitution. The Budhists are atheist-

ical only inasmuch as their θεος, Placer, or Disposer, (from θεω to place) is non-intelligent. In proportion to the acquisition of *pin* is the assurance of prosperity. Alms-giving is the readiest means of acquiring *pin;* and the highest order, the most meritorious mode, of alms-giving is charity to the priests. A Pinkama is a manufacture of merit.

The word Wahala signifies "the royal gate," or "the precincts of the palace," and this festival was so denominated because some of its principal ceremonies took place in the palace, and it was carried on for the benefit of the royal household.

The highest order of Budhist priesthood, Upasampadā, having become extinct, Kirti Sri, 1750, sent ambassadors to Siam, to procure its restoration. On their return they were interrogated as to the festivals celebrated by the Siamese monarch, and they having said, though it is supposed falsely, that the relic of Budha was carried at certain times through the streets of the metropolis in solemn procession, Kirti Sri immediately commanded that a similar festival should be instituted in Kandy, which was continued by his successor upon the throne. It was thus conducted. When the month Wesak was at hand, orders were issued to the five districts to furnish the royal treasury with the necessary supplies, such as rice, flowers, oil, &c., and these being brought, at the first quarter of the moon two or more nagas, or candidates for ordination, were presented to the king, and were treated with great respect. On the evening of the full moon, the nagas, accompanied by the relic, with a grand procession of elephants, flags, music, and dancers, and attended by the principal chiefs, paraded the streets of Kandy. Next morning, the priests of both the Malwatta and Asgiri temples, were invited to the Hall of Audience, when they received an offering of food from the king. The same ceremonies were repeated at the four following quarters of the moon.

When a Pinkama is now to be celebrated, the tomtom is beat by order of the Government Agent, directing persons who are willing to contract for the supply of the articles required for the festival to make application to the cutcherry. The articles consist of robes for the priests, white cloth, oil, &c., as set forth in the usual form; and these are supplied at the expense of the Government. As there is no royal household at present in existence, the merit of the ceremony is supposed by the people

to be acquired by the Government, and they naturally imagine that it is for this purpose the festivals are continued.

4. The Katina Pinkama.—By an ordinance of Budha, the priests are not allowed to remain in a fixed habitation, except during the season of the rains; they must live in the desert, or itinerate from place to place. The word pansal, from *pan*, a leaf, and *sala*, a house, or place of resort, means literally a residence made of leaves; and this word is still used of the monasteries in which the priests reside, though they are substantial and permanent erections. During the rainy season, *was*, which is supposed to continue three months, the priests are specially provided for by the people as an act of merit, in return for which they receive religious instruction, or rather the bana is read for their benefit, though they do not understand a word of its language. The succeeding month is called cheewara māsa, or the month of the robe. The people at this time purchase one or more pieces of cloth, according to their circumstances, which they present to the priests. The Katina, or cloth for the robe, cannot be received except by a sanghayā, an association of the priesthood, which must be constituted of at least five priests: thus carefully are the vows of poverty to be kept, that the Katina cannot be received except by a fraternity, nor even by them, except in this particular month. The cloth is produced and offered to the associated priesthood as sanghika. The priests then hold a conversation among each other, and enquire, "Which of us stands in need of a robe?" The priest who is most in need of a dress ought now to express his destitution, but this rule is not attended to, as the priest who has read bana usually receives the robe, whether the most destitute or not. The priest respectfully asks the rest of sanghayā to partake of the merits produced by the offering. The assembled priests, assisted by the upāsakayās make the cloth into a robe, and dye it yellow, the whole of which process must be concluded in 60 of their hours, or a natural day.

In some places the robe is manufactured throughout from the raw material in the same space of time. The bana maduwa is seen filled with women, sitting upon the ground; some bring in the cotton from the tree, others open it out, others prepare it for the spinners, who make it into yawn; it is then handed over to the weavers who wait outside with their simple looms, and

make it into cloth. In the evening of the same day the cloth is received by the priests, stitched into a robe, and dyed the usual color. This custom is more practised on the coast than in the interior. It is not an ordinance of Budha.

In the Katina Pinkama the cloth is presented at the expense of the Government, and is received with the usual ceremonies by the priests.

5. The Kārtiya Festival.—This festival is celebrated in the month Kārtteka, at present answering to our December, on the night of the full moon. The people were required, during the Kandyan rule, to present offerings of oil to the king as part of their tax or custom. In the walls of the palace, as well as in the wall carried along the side of the lake, and in other places, there are triangular niches, or recesses, in which lamps were placed. The exact moment for commencing the ceremony having been ascertained by the astrologer, at the fortunate neketa the lamps were lighted. There were also poles erected before the palace, to which lamps were attached, and when the great square, the dēwālas, and the principal streets were illuminated, the city must have presented an appearance of some splendour. The palace was the scene of the greatest brilliancy. The relic was also carried in procession, with its usual retinue of elephants, musicians, &c. This festival was instituted by one of the Malabar kings, in honor of Maha Bali, the great hero of Indian mythology. It is said that in ancient times two virgins were annually sacrificed on the occasion.

6. The Alut Sāl Festival.—A better account of this festival than I have been able to procure elsewhere, is to be found in Davy's "Account of the Interior of Ceylon." The words alut sāl mean literally, new rice.

"This feast, the fourth and last of the great annual festivals, was observed in the month of January, when the moon was on the increase. A nekat-wattoruwa was previously prepared by the astrologers, in which a fortunate hour, on two different days was pointed out; one for bringing the new rice into the city, and the other for dressing and eating it. This document was sent to the king with the usual honours, and copies of it were carried by the chiefs to the royal farms in the neighbourhood. At these farms the ears of paddy and the new rice were packed up for the temple and palace, and king's stores, by the Gabadā

Nilamas and their officers. The ears of paddy, carefully put into new earthen pots, and the grain into clean white bags, were attached to pingos for the sake of more convenient carriage. Those intended for the Malagawa were conveyed on an elephant; those for the dewalas were borne by men marching under canopies of white cloth; and those for the palace and royal stores were carried by the people of the king's villages, of respectable caste and well dressed, with a piece of white tape over their mouths, to guard against impurity. They started from the different farms under a salute of jinjalls; were attended by tom-toms, flags, and others honors, and were met on the way by the adigars and chiefs, who attended them to the great square, to wait the nekata hour, the arrival of which was announced by a discharge of jinjalls; when the rice and ears of paddy were carried to the respective places for which they were destined. At the same fortunate hour, the chiefs and people brought new rice and paddy from their own fields and houses.

"The nekata for eating the new rice occurred two or three days after the preceding. The rice was dressed according to rule, and mixed with certain curries, and ate with the face in a particular direction; on all which points instructions were given in the nekat-wattōruwa. The rice that was dressed and offered to the gods on this occasion, was either buried or consumed by the priests; not indiscriminately, but by those who had led previously a life of purity."

These accounts are confessedly meagre and imperfect. A fuller description might have given a greater interest to the narrative, but it would not have added at all to the force of my grand argument. At these festivals open encouragement, pecuniary assistance, is given by the Government of this colony to the astrologer, the Budhist priest, and the kapuwa of the Hindoo god, embracing nearly the whole circle of native superstition.

VII. The British Government pays the expenses of a ceremony which consists of invocation by a demon priest.

In the account paid by the Government for the Perahara of Kandy, the following item is inserted:—"For the Devil Dancing called Walliyakoon, £3 13*s*. 2½*d*." This dancing is continued seven days after the various Peraharas, both at Kandy and the outstations. I had an opportunity of witnessing the preparations made for the recent ceremony at Lankātilaka, and the

priest very readily answered the questions I put to him upon the subject.

The yakun are not exactly correspondent to the devils of revelation; they are lapsed intelligences, of malignant dispositions, and are supposed to have the power of inflicting diseases and other calamities upon mankind. Their choicest food is human flesh, and their nectar the reeking blood. They are almost universally propitiated among the Singhalese, and a belief in their power is commonly the last superstition that leaves the native mind on the reception of the truth. The people are in absolute misery from the idea that these infernal spirits are constantly besetting their path; and the gracious discipline of divine Providence, by being attributed to this source, is robbed of all its beneficial influence, and the sufferer is deprived of that consolation which would otherwise be imparted to the mind. The parent, on seeing the drooping form of his child wasted by disease, is haunted by the further thought of agony, that a demon has chosen for its victim the object of his affection; and he applies for relief, not to God in prayer, but to the miserable yakadurā, or devil priest. The devils are sometimes invoked to inspire the mind in times of danger, or for the commission of crime. A few days ago two young men were executed in Kandy for murder; they ascended the scaffold with an air of the most perfect indifference, if it were not something rather like triumph, and the bystanders attributed their courage to demoniacal influence.

The word yakun is also applied to demi-gods, or deified heroes, but in these instances there is usually something fierce or malicious in their character, and they are regarded by the people as devils, though this epithet usually designates a somewhat different species of being. The word Waliyakun seems to be a corruption of Wediyakun, and refers to three heroes, one the son of Vishnu, the second produced from a lotus flower, and the third from a blade of grass: they became famous hunters. I have not been able to discover any consistent reason why they in particular are invoked at the close of the Perahara, though I have had given to me an account of the traditions yet in existence respecting their exploits in this and other countries. The ceremonies were formerly carried on in the palace, but the last king suspecting that thereby the royal premises were defiled, com-

manded that they should be banished to the dēwāla, where they are still continued.

The performances last seven days. On the day appointed for their commencement, the yakadurā, having previously bathed and put on clean clothes, dedicates himself to the service, and throws the pūna nūla, or sacred thread, over his shoulder. He then makes the atamangala, a magical diagram of eight sides, with raw rice, and begins to mutter verses and dance, continuing the service until midnight. On the 5th day there are dances in five different modes, and it is believed that if these are not rightly performed the consequence will be death. On the 7th day, there are dances in seven different modes, and the greatest care is required in their performance, or the same fatal consequences will ensue, both to the tomtom beater and the priest. The former seats himself upon a mat and closes his eyes, that he may pay a closer attention to the time, and the priest also closes his eyes, that he may not be tempted to dance in the wrong step. The concluding ceremony is called yakkan, and is celebrated in five different modes.

Robert Knox refers to the Waliyakun, when he says:—"At this time they have a superstition, which lasteth six or seven days, too foolish to write; it consists in dancing, singing, and juggling. The reason of which is, lest the eyes of the people, or the power of the jaccos, or infernal spirits, might any ways prove prejudicial or noisome to the aforesaid gods in their progress abroad."

The vouchers for the payment of this item are written in the usual form. Among the particulars at the head of the receipt it is stated, in so many words, "For the *Devil Dancing* called Waliyakoon." The voucher is to this effect:—"Received from the Honourable the Government Agent for the Central Province, the Sum of...... being in full as per the above account of particulars...... for Her Majesty's Service, and for which I have signed duplicate receipts of the same tenor and date." Thus there are annual invocations of evil spirits, both in Kandy and at various outstations, which are paid for, from the Government revenue, by a British agent, expressly—numerous vouchers testifying to the same—as being celebrated "For Her Majesty's Service!"

I feel as if I should be a partaker in these sins, were I silent

respecting them, and it is from a sense of duty that I have published these particulars. If the position be true; that political power has been granted us, that the nations brought under our dominion may receive the benefits of divine revelation, it is evident that the neglect of this duty will bring upon us the anger of heaven; our authority will be taken from us, and given to some other people better disposed to carry forward the counsel of God.

Whilst upon this topic, I will introduce an extract from one of the most recent periodicals that I have had an opportunity of perusing, the Dublin University Magazine for April, 1839. It is the more entitled to attention, as presenting the opinion of a work not professedly religious, and as uttering the general sentiments of the well-informed classes at home concerning a subject on which, from my peculiar situation, I may perhaps be considered as a prejudiced expounder. It is contained in a review of "Statistics of the Colonies of the British Empire: By B. Montgomery Martin, Esq."

"The first and most serious consideration that is forced upon us by the general view of the British Colonies which Mr. Martin presents to us in a tabular form, at the commencement of his large work, is, that of the hundred and one millions which compose the population of the British Colonies, ninety-eight millions are Pagans, or Mahomedans, while the number of the Christians does not exceed three millions. This fact imposes an awful responsibility upon the rulers of Great Britain, and upon its inhabitants; for this state of things cannot continue without the great and sinful neglect of both, and it is impossible that punishment should not follow neglect of the momentous duties which it prescribes to the nation. Our rulers are responsible if they neglect those duties, but the responsibility does not attach to them alone, we also are every one of us culpable if we do not call the attention of the national councils to this awful and extensive ignorance, and call upon them to use every exertion to remove it, and declare that we and the whole nation are ready and desirous to bear the burden which those exertions may place upon us. England, the most highly enlightened and civilized nation upon earth, enjoying the knowledge of the sublime truths of the Christian revelation in its purest form, freed from the errors and corruptions which human devices introduced, has

from her wealth more power of diffusing truth than ever fell to the lot of any nation, and has ninety-eight millions of subjects ignorant of our divine Redeemer, and for the most part slaves to the most abject and debasing superstitions. Her duty is clearly pointed out by her situation. It is to preach the Gospel among nations, to dispell the darkness that still pervades so large a portion of the globe, to spread abroad the light of Christian truth, and to teach to millions of her grateful subjects the knowledge of that God who died for their salvation. As surely as God made and preserves the world, a blessing must attend exertions in such a cause, they must be crowned with success, and repay tenfold to the nation from which they proceeded."

There is no sin so frequently denounced in the Scriptures as idolatry. It is called expressly by God himself, "that abominable thing which I hate."—Jer. xliv. 4. The prophets have thundered forth against it in anathemas that are among the most sublime aggregations to which human language was ever elevated; and when we read them we admire and tremble, as the attention of the mariner is attracted by the splendour of the storm that may in an instant strike his bark into shivers. The Israelite who worshipped strange gods was stoned. The city that became idolatrous was to be "consumed as a burnt offering, of which nothing remains;" it was to be consecrated to Jehovah, that is to say, put under the ban, outlawed, proscribed, to become an holocaust. Every remnant of idolatry was to be destroyed. It was the prevalence of this sin which filled up the measure of Israelitish iniquity, and the punishment of the people was captivity by the waters of Babylon, where they had to hang that harp upon the willows which had thrilled with tones so sweet in their native land, and to weep as they remembered the privileges of Zion. The God of the Israelites is our God, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and if with Jehovah there be "no variableness," there must now be in the divine mind the same detestation of idolatry as in the patriarchal and prophetical times. The voice which then spoke, now speaks, and to us its admonitions come, louder still from the mighty ages through which they pass. "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."—2 Cor. x. 20.

To what I have brought forward, it is probable that two ob-

jections will be made :—1. That the interference of the Government is too slight to be productive of harm :—and 2. That the usages I deprecate were solemnly promised to the people at the time of their subjection to the British crown.

1. It has been stated, in the preceding pages, that the British government of Ceylon appoints the principal Budhist priests of the interior province—confirms in their appointments the priests of the palace at Kandy—appoints the lay chiefs of the principal temples dedicated to the worship of the Hindoo deities—incurs the annual expense of the Perahara at Kandy—pays the expenses of other heathen festivals—and sanctions devil-dances, invocation to evil spirits, (a ceremony banished from his palace by a heathen monarch,) in the name of our Sovereign Lady the Queen. Can it be seriously maintained that these are trifles, by those who hold the divine authority of the word of God? It is true that there are no pecuniary advantages accruing to the British Government from these practices, but they are, doubtless, continued under the supposition that they will tend to consolidate the British power in Ceylon; and if they are not carried on, as similar evils have been upon the continent of India, to swell the receipts of the British Government, they are intended to increase either the reverence of its name or the stability of its dominion, and where is the difference in the sin?

All persons at all acquainted with the case are well aware, that the influence of the Government is here paramount, and that there can be no interference whatever in the religion of the country, without an implied approbation of that religion in the sight of the natives. "Why have the company," was asked by a Hindoo, "any thing to do with Juggernaut, if his worship be wrong?" The Kandyans argue in the same manner, and heathenism has at this moment an influence in Ceylon which it would not otherwise be able to maintain, from the support it receives through the patronage of our Christian Government.

There are many very worthy individuals who consider infidelity to be worse than heathenism, and they would uphold the Budhist religion, or any other, merely because it is a religion, and not scepticism. Without entering into this question, I do not see why the people should become infidel, were their present system to be annihilated without further ceremony. There are emisaries of the cross who are ready to pour into their villages, and tell

them at once of man's misery and God's mercy, proclaiming the glorious truth that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. We have bibles and tracts, which we shall be glad to carry to every hamlet in the land, heralds of reconciliation, which may continue as silent monitors in those places where the living minister can seldom have access. There is never any fear of a dearth of instruction where there is true Christianity. It is of the nature of the subtle flame, active, expansive, communicative; it regenerates that which it destroys; it "operates unspent;" and we have express promises from God which meet the difficulties assumed, in the declaration that the spread of knowledge shall be divinely assisted, and that its energy shall be communicated to all. "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Hab. ii. 14. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." —Joel ii. 28, 29.

2. The other objection may be met without any difficulty, not simply by argument but by fact. The various treaties that have been made with the Kandyan people are upon record, and are open to our examination.

On the 2nd of March, 1815, "a solemn conference was held in the Audience Hall of the Palace at Kandy, between His Excellency the Governor and Commander of the Forces, on behalf of His Majesty and of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, on the one part, and the Adikars, Dessaves, and the other principal chiefs of the Kandyan Provinces, on behalf of the inhabitants, and in presence of the Mohottales, Coraals, Vidahns, and other subordinate headmen from the several provinces, and of the people then and there assembled, on the other part." The British flag was on this day hoisted in Kandy for the first time, and the establishment of the British dominion in the interior was announced by a royal salute.

The 5th clause of the treaty entered into on this occasion consists of the following memorable sentence:—"The religion of Boodhoo, professed by the chiefs and inhabitants of these provinces, is declared inviolable, and its rights, ministers, and

places of worship are to be maintained and protected." I have hitherto refrained from comment in publishing the acts of the British Government, but in this declaration, that the religion of Budha shall be INVIOLABLE, there is something so strange, so unwarrantable, that I cannot help expressing my extreme surprise that such an error should have been committed by Sir Robert Brownrigg, whose respect for revelation cannot be called in question. If it was meant simply to signify that there should be no overt act on the part of the British Government to subvert the religion of the country, it was very improperly worded; if it meant more, it was blasphemy. In a demi-official communication of the same date it is further said:—"The treaty comprises, though in a summary way, the heads of a constitution carefully adapted to the wishes of the chiefs and people, and with a more particular degree of attention to some prejudices, the indulgence of which was plainly understood to be a sine quâ non of their voluntary submission to an European power. The preservation of the religion of Boodhoo, was the first; the other (hardly inferior in their estimation) was the recognition and continuance of their local institutions." The anxiety of the Kandyans for the preservation of their superstitions, is in powerful contrast with the indifference manifested by the Europeans to the interests of Christianity.

In the month of October, 1817, an insurrection broke out, notwithstanding, as is stated, among other particulars, in the preamble of the Proclamation issued on its suppression, Nov. 21, 1818, there had been paid "the strictest attention to the protection and maintenance of the rites, ministers, and places of worship of the religion of Budhoo." The following clause of this Proclamation speaks in a different tone to the language of the former Bulletin:—

"16. As well the priests as all the ceremonies of the Budhist religion, shall receive the respect which in former times was shown them: at the same time, it is in no wise to be understood, that the protection of the Government is to be denied to the peaceable exercise, by all other persons, of the religion which they respectively profess, or to the erection, under due license from His Excellency, of places of worship in proper situations."

In no other part of the Proclamation is there a single word said respecting the religion of Budha, and all that is here pro-

mised is, that its priests and ceremonies shall receive the accustomed respect, but from whom we are not told.

I am no jurisconsult, but if the simple matter of fact is to be taken, I see no reason whatever, from the tenor of these treaties, why the British Government should be considered as bound to interfere with the appointment of heathen priests, the celebration of heathen festivals, and the pecuniary support of some of the most gross superstitions that ever entered into the mind of man. These things are contrary to the law of God, and therefore, whatever might have been the consequence, it would still have been the duty of the British Government to rid itself of the responsibility, though a promise had been given to support heathenism in far stronger terms than any that have been actually used; there would have been a prior bar to the accomplishment of its intentions; but happily, as the Kandyans would not have comprehended the force of this argument, it is not necessary to resort to such a mode of explanation.

The 8th clause of the original convention is to this effect:—"Subject to these conditions, the administration of civil and criminal justice and police over the Kandyan inhabitants of the said provinces, is to be exercised according to established forms, and by the ordinary authorities; saving always the inherent right of Government to redress grievances and reform abuses in all instances whatever, particular or general, where such interposition shall become necessary." The authority granted by this reservation has been used by the Government in cases which have affected the prejudices of the people far more powerfully, than if it were to refuse, without any reason given, all support of priests and processions from this time forth and for ever.

But the most important official document to which I have to direct attention is the Proclamation issued by Sir R. Wilmot Horton, Aug. 9, 1834. The first three clauses are as follows:—

"Whereas a treasonable conspiracy has been originated by certain Kandyan chiefs and priests, who had for their object the subversion of British supremacy, by which they had hoped to crush the liberties which under that supremacy had been conferred upon the people:

"And whereas by evidence laid before the Government it appears that in pursuance of their traitorous design it was in-

tended to seduce His Majesty's Kandyan subjects from their allegiance by false assertions: amongst others that it was the object of the British Government to destroy the Religion of Buddhoo and to revive that system of compulsory service to which they had been formerly subjected:

"It is hereby declared that such assertions are false and unfounded, and that although the Government will no longer interfere to enforce compulsory attendance at religious Festivals, the inhabitants of this Colony, professing the Religion of Buddhoo, will continue to be protected and supported in the freest exercise of their religion."

This Proclamation is important, inasmuch as it is the most recent document issued by the Government, which can be considered in the light of a treaty, promise, agreement, or convention; and as it points out the relative situation in which the Government stands with respect to the Budhist religion at the present moment; for be it remembered, that it is to Budhism, and Budhism alone, that the Government stands pledged in any way whatever, not a word being said in any of the treaties respecting the various ceremonies of Hindoo origin that are now carried on by command of the British Government, with the sole exception that in the 30th clause of the Proclamation of Nov. 21, 1818, it is said that "the attendance at the great Feast, which certain persons were bound to give, shall be continued to be given punctually and gratuitously." I am willing to concede all that is promised in the Proclamation of Sir R. Wilmot Horton, that "the inhabitants of this colony professing the religion of Buddhoo shall continue to be protected and supported in the freest exercise of their religion." Let the authorities continue to protect and support the Budhists "in the freest *exercise* of *their* religion," and cease to protect and support Budhism, *per se*, and the controversy between the church and the Government will cease at once. I am no advocate for coercion. I have travelled far, and seen much of the working of different systems, and all that I have seen has tended to confirm me in the opinion that liberty, and above all religious liberty, is the dearest birthright of the Briton. I would willingly, were it in my power, confer the same privileges upon every being that possesses "a reasonable soul." It has been at a vast expense of argument and blood that right princi-

ples have been established, and I should deem myself unworthy of the rights I enjoy, I should account myself a very fool, unto whom the instructive lessons of all past ages had been uttered in vain, were I to advocate any attempt at the compulsion of the mind.

Another valuable document, among the communications recently published relative to the interests of Ceylon, is the "Report of Lieut.-Colonel Colebrooke, one of His Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry, upon the administration of the Government of Ceylon; dated Dec. 24, 1831." I shall make a few extracts from it, some of which will be recognised as confirmatory of my own views, and their importance will be accepted in apology for their length.

"The possessions of the temples constitute a large proportion of the cultivated lands in the Kandyan provinces. In the several temples and colleges there are registers of the lands dependent on them, but these registers not having been examined, their extent has not been accurately ascertained. At my request, translations were made of the registers in the principal temples of Kandy; and from these it appears that the tenants and proprietors of what are called "Temple Lands" in the several provinces, are liable, on the requisition of the chiefs and priests, to render services and contributions of various kinds. These are minutely detailed in the registers, and the occupier of each allotment of land has a special duty assigned to him, or a special contribution to make, either for the repairs of the temples, the subsistence of the chiefs and priests, and their attendants, or on occasion of the annual festivals. The regulation of these festivals, which are annually held in Kandy, and at the provincial temples, was the prerogative of the king of Kandy, and the holders of temple lands are still summoned by authority of the Government. To those who reside at a considerable distance, the necessity of making long journeys to deliver some article of little value, or to assist at some protracted ceremony, became irksome and inconvenient: and as they are liable to detention for a month at Kandy during the annual festival, these duties are very negligently performed, and numbers omit them altogether. In 1820 the Government Agent for Saffragam (a distant province to the southward) stated the willingness of the landholders to pay a tax in commutation of the temple service;

but in deference to the chiefs and priests, who were opposed to innovation, the measure was not adopted. Some landholders, from their influence, have been allowed to pay a composition to the temples, instead of rendering personal service for their lands. The laxity of the people, and the remissness of the Government officers in enforcing the orders for their attendance, has been urged as a subject of complaint by the chiefs.

"Where the lands are situated near to the temples, and in districts where roads are constructing, the service is less unpopular, as it is in reality less severe than the government service; but any improvement in the condition of the tenants of the crown would strengthen the desire of the tenants of the chiefs and temples throughout the country for a similar reform of their tenures. If temple lands should hereafter come into possession of persons who are not Bhoodists, new objections would probably be made to the performance of the temple service by such persons.

"The selection and appointment of chiefs and priests of temples was a prerogative of the kings of Kandy, which is still exercised by the Government, although in the nomination to the priesthood the recommendation from the wihares (colleges) is usually attended to. This interference of the Government in the religious affairs of the country, although induced from considerations of policy, has been attended with much inconvenience. It has failed to satisfy the chiefs, and it has checked the improvement of the country, and the advancement of the people. While the Government was bound, by the convention of 1815, to protect the people in the free exercise of their religion, the interposition of its authority to enfore an observance of its rites is at variance with those principles of religious freedom which it is a paramount duty to uphold. Nor can it justly afford to the Bhoodist faith a greater degree of support than it extends to the Christian religion, and to other systems, including the Hindoo and Mahomedan. In some districts, particularly those of Colombo and Galle, the Christians are more numerous than the Bhoodists, and the exertions made by the Christian missionaries for the diffusion of knowledge and for the correction of the habits and morals of the people throughout the country, have pre-eminently tended to promote the best interests of the country."

I have been informed that it was principally to the influence of Sir John D'Oyley the priests were indebted for the very favorable circumstances under which the Budhist religion was placed at the commencement of our Kandyan rule. Considerable jealousy was for some time evinced by the Government with respect to Missionary exertion. The first Mission School was established by the Rev. R. Newstead, of the Wesleyan Mission, at Rillegalle, a little on the Kandyan side of the limits, on the road between Kornegalle and Colombo. It was commenced early in 1819. At this time the Rev. Samuel Lambric, the worthy founder of the Church Mission in the interior, was stationed in Kandy as Chaplain to the Forces. An application was made in the following year, for permission to establish a school at Kornegalle, but the undertaking was prohibited by the following official notification :—

"*Kandyan Office, Colombo, 20th Jan.* 1820.

"Sir,

"I am directed by His Excellency the Governor to inform you, in reply to your letter addressed to him requesting permission to establish a school in the Seven Corles, that it is not deemed, under existing circumstances, politically advisable to sanction the measure for the present.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"G. LUSIGNAN.

"Sec. Kandyan Provinces."

"The Rev. R. Newstead."

This prohibition was rescinded in the course of the same year, through the kind interposition of H. Wright, Esq., at that time Agent of Government for the Seven Korlas.

It would be out of place were I to notice at large the efforts that have since been made to introduce Christianity among the Kandyans, but I may be allowed to say, that in no instance have the people generally opposed the instruction of their children, or been averse to the commencement of divine service in their villages. A few days ago I addressed a company of men and women in one of the villages of Udanuwara. The man in whose house I stood said at the close of the service,—"The people are dissatisfied with the temple worship; they are dissatisfied with

the dēwāla worship, they are indifferent to Christianity; they live like the brutes; but if you come again and again and instruct us in these things, we are willing to hear, and we shall be able to learn." These sentiments are very general in the places I have recently visited. Even so early as 1819, a missionary wrote thus:—"On my last journey to Kandy (not the city, but the province) I visited two large Budhist temples, and had some interesting conversation with the priests, who do not seem much opposed to us, except from a kind of traditionary prejudice, than which nothing is more natural; but there is dead inertness about them and their system which would never stand against the energetic exertions of a Christian missionary, attended with the blessing of his divine Master. I fully believe that, unsupported by the arm of secular power, they would fall before us like dew before the sun. The lower orders of the people, so far from appearing to defend their priests and their temples, seem rather disposed to laugh at their absurdities, when they hear them rationally exposed in their own language."

For the information of persons unacquainted with the present circumstances of the colony, it may be necessary, before I conclude, to refer briefly to its Christian statistics. The Ecclesiastical Department consists of an archdeacon; 5 European chaplains; 1 Portuguese do.; 2 Singhalese do.; 2 Malabar do.; 5 proponents, or preachers of the Gospel to the natives; regisrars, clerks, &c. The clergyman of the Dutch church is also supported by the Government. Ecclesiastical expenditure, 1837: ordinary, £7,924 1*s.* 2¾*d.*, extraordinary, £2,240 12*s.* 9¼*d.*

There are 36 Government schools: expenditure £1,541; scholars, 2,061, of whom 222 are girls. In addition, the head master of the Colombo Academy receives £200 per annum, and his assistant £100. The incidental expenses for education, including grants to the various Missionary Societies, may be stated at £1,100, making a total expenditure, on the part of Government, of about £3,000 per annum for educational purposes.

The Church Mission: European missionaries, 9, when the establishment is complete; catechists, 10; schoolmasters and other subordinate agents, 97; average attendance at the services, 2,418; communicants, 133; schools, 58; seminarists, 71; boys, 2,036; girls, 426.

The Wesleyan Mission: Singhalese district: European missionaries, 5; assistant missionaries, 9; catechists, 12; communicants, 557; schools, 81; boys, 3,257; girls, 558. Tamul district: European missionaries, 3; assistant missionaries, 5; communicants, 139; scholars, 2,136. Total communicants, 696; scholars, 5,951.

The Baptist Mission: European missionaries, 2; assistants, 5; schools, 11; scholars, 400.

The American Mission: American missionaries, 6: assistant missionaries, 2; catechists, 6; native assistants, 60; pupils in the seminary, 101; girls in the central school, 90; native free schools, 42; boys, 1,200; girls, 300. The number of scholars is far below the usual average, as most of the native schools have been suspended, from pecuniary embarrassment.

The Eastern Female Education Society has established 3 schools in Ceylon; the Roman Catholic missionaries have 118 schools under their care; and there are private schools in several of the principal towns.

As the population of the colony is stated at 1,256,019, the Government expenditure for educational purposes will average a little more than two farthings for each individual. The number of children receiving Christian instruction averages 1 in 88 of the whole population; but in the Tamul district the proportion is one twelfth.

I have no data by which I can ascertain the proportion of Christians and heathens. The number of *professing* Christians in the maritime provinces is very large, but so far as the Singhalese districts are concerned, if the Roman Catholics be excepted, I fear that the number of adults who do not practise heathen superstitions in some form or other, cannot be stated at more than five or six thousand. There are many Budhists priests who were baptised in their infancy, and there are kapuwas yet practising their profession, who call themselves Christians because they have been baptised. The Central Province may be considered as entirely heathen, the exceptions being too few to be taken into the account. The island, naturally most luxuriant is morally desert; but the servants of Christ are encouraged, by many promising indications, to proceed in their work. Many triumphs have already been achieved; the promises are sure;

and even this people "shall soon stretch out their hands unto God."

A better opportunity than the present could not have been found for this discussion. The Right Honorable James A. Stewart Mackenzie, from the time of his entrance upon the Government of this rising colony, has constantly manifested that it is one grand object of his rule to promote the interests of religion generally in the island, and the spread of Christianity among the natives of all classes; and I have the greater satisfaction in making this attempt, as I know full well that if these evils are seen by His Excellency, in the light in which I have been led to regard them, he will be the readiest individual in the colony to come forward and decree their suppression. It ought to be generally known, as an example worthy of universal imitation among Europeans, that the family of His Excellency, as I have heard upon good authority, have never, though often solicited, visited a single temple, or been present at the performance of any heathen ceremony, since their arrival in Kandy. The acts of former Governors have placed the present administration in circumstances of some difficulty, but these may be speedily overcome by the judgment and energy of His Excellency, aided as I trust they will now be by the voice of the church, too long silent. The present Acting Agent of Government for the Central Province is the Honorable J. N. Mooyaart, a gentleman who has stood forward nobly in defence of religion, during a long residence in the colony, and by his own personal exertions endeavoured to spread its saving power among the people.

The most liberal assistance is rendered by the Government to the various philanthropic and religious institutions of the island. The missionary societies receive its countenance and support, and are allowed the free developement of their separate plans, for the benefit of the benighted Ceylonese. The march of improvement in the political condition of the people has recently been most rapid; and though there are yet many defects both constitutional and executive, I speak advisedly when I say, that no land ever shone upon by an eastern sun had greater reason to rejoice in its Government, than the people of Ceylon in the beneficent aspect of the British rule; compared with their former condition it is wealth to poverty, freedom to slavery, and

dignity to the lowest degradation. The natives at large see their privilege, and are grateful for the boon.

Not alone were the subverters of the Kandyan monarchy in paying too great a respect to the native superstitions. The brave men who conquered our eastern possessions by their blood-stained swords appear on this count to have been generally culpable. It must be their excuse that at this time the subject of conversion had not occupied its rightful share of the public attention; and that as the pastors of the church, as well as its private members, were, with scarce an exception, one and all indifferent, it was not to be supposed that military men, in the confusion of conquest, would regard the matter in the serious light in which it has since been presented. It was an easy method of soothing the minds of an irritated people, to flatter their religious prejudices; it lulled alarm without incurring expense, and was in many instances a pecuniary advantage; it was too tempting an opportunity to be foregone. The servants of Christ have been awakened from their stupor; they have argued the question in words that have told like the thunders of heaven; and even the East India Company, in the Despatch I have already quoted, has been brought to acknowledge the justice of the requisition, and bow before the ordinance of God, "I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." When a power which commands the obedience of nearly 100,000,000 people, and these too Bramins, the proudest and most bigoted of all religionists, has grappled with the subject, surmounted its difficulties, and relinquished a vast revenue in consequence; it were idle, it were worse than ridiculous, to talk of insuperable difficulties connected 800,000 people, and these Budhists, the most indifferent section of the whole heathen race, and insulated in their geographical position from the rest of the world. It has been decided that the patronage of Idolatry by a Christian Government is wrong, and the only question now to be argued is, whether the acts of the British Government of Ceylon are affected by this sentence of condemnation. I have given my own humble opinion, and I now leave the subject to the more searching investigation of those who are better fitted for the task. Sincerity of intention, and local opportunities for procuring information which few other persons not officially connected with Government possess, must be pleaded in excuse for my

presumption in having dared to lift so feeble a hand in support of the ark of my God. I may be wrong in my opinion—there may be no cause for grief or alarm—I may have espoused a cause in which none of my friends can support me; but by all that is glorious in truth, and all that is accursed in error; if there be an unspeakable bliss offered to the believer in heaven, and an unsearchable torment appointed to the sinner in hell; I ask, I entreat of the members of the Christian church, that they will give the subject of this Essay their most serious attention.

APPENDIX.

THE PERAHARA.

The word perahara means literally a procession, and though the epithet may be applied to any procession, it is used emphatically of a festival held annually in the city of Kandy, which commenced this year on the day of the new moon in August.

We have tried in vain to obtain an account of its origin from the natives; they say that its history is lost in the darkness of antiquity. A kapuralā of Udanuwara refers it to the time of Gajābāhu, who reigned A.D. 113, and says that this king was a native of some foreign country, where these processions were in common use. This account cannot be correct, as Gajābāhu was the son of a native prince, but on referring to the history of this monarch, there are circumstances related which may assist us in our researches.

Gajābāhu resided at Anurādhapura. One night, when walking through the city in disguise, he saw a widow weeping, whose sons had been taken captive by the Solli king, in an invasion of Ceylon from the continent, during the previous reign. The king made a mark upon the door of the house, and returned to his palace. Next morning he called his nobles, and asked what injustice had been committed in the city. They replied that the whole city was as free from injustice as a house wherein a festival is celebrated, when the king, in anger, sent for the woman whose dwelling he had marked, and asked her why she was crying upon the previous evening. She said that in the reign of the king's father, the people of Solli had taken 12,000 captives from Ceylon, among whom were two of her sons, and that it was on this account she wept. Upon hearing this, they collected an army, and proceeding to Yāpāpatuna, (Jaffna) he informed his people that as the Solli king had taken captive his subjects, he must go and bring them back to their own homes. With Neela, a giant, he arrived at the sea shore, where he dismissed his army,

and taking an iron rod he struck the sea, which divided, and he and the giant went over to the continent. The Solli king was in great fear, and to increase his terror Neela took one of the royal elephants, and dashed it against another with such force, that both the animals died. In the same manner, the giant devastated the country. The Solli king, when he heard of these things from his nobles, asked Gajābāhu why he had come with an army to destroy his realm; to which he replied, that he had brought no army besides his giant, and proceeded, " In the days of your father, when my father reigned, he went over to Ceylon and seized 12,000 persons, and brought them hither captive, and I have come to demand them." The Solli king answered forthwith, " Though you go to dewyalōkaya, and receive the assistance of the asoors, you will not be able to overcome me. Gajābāhu was greatly enraged at this refusal to deliver up the captives, and declared that he would not only take his own subjects, but 12,000 other captives as well, and he threatened to burn the royal city to ashes in case of refusal. To show his great strength, that the threats were not idle words, he squeezed water out of a handful of dry sand, and afterwards out of the iron rod, which frightened the Solli king to such a degree, that he delivered up the 24,000 persons demanded, the golden halamba of Pattinee, the sacred utensils of 4 dēwālas, and "the refection dish" of Budha; and with these Gajābāhu returned to Ceylon. The 12,000 Singhalese were sent to their respective homes, and the 12,000 captives were allowed to reside in Alootkūrakorla, a district to the northward of Colombo, the inhabitants of which to this day retain many marks of their continental origin.

The sacred vessels here referred to had been taken away in the reign of Walagambāhu, B. C. 90, and there can be little doubt that it was to commemorate their return the Perahara was originally established, as the carrying of the halamba and other relics seems to be the most essential part of the procession, and to the dividing of the waters also a reference will afterwards be made. It is not clear from the narrative whether the halamba had been previously in Ceylon, though from other traditions we have heard we should suppose they had; but this will make little difference in the intention of the festival, as it

may still be held to celebrate their arrival. It is upon these relics that the heathen natives swear in the courts of justice. The origin of the Perahara is therefore to be dated as far back as the second century of the Christian æra.

The account given of the Perahara by Knox, as it was celebrated in the reign of Raja Singha II. 1670, is as follows :—

"The greatest solemnity is performed in the city of Cande; but at the same time the like festival or Perahar is observed in divers other cities and towns of the land. The Perahar at Kandy is ordered after this manner.

"The priest bringeth forth a painted stick, about which strings of flowers are hanged, and so it is wrapped in branched silk, some part covered and some not; before which the people bow down and worship; each one presenting him with an offering according to his free will. These free-will offerings being received from the people, the priest takes his painted stick on his shoulder, having a cloth tied about his mouth to keep his breath from defiling this pure piece of wood, and gets up upon an elephant all covered with white cloth, upon which he rides with all the triumph that king and kingdom can afford, through all the streets of the city. But before him go, first some 50 or 60 elephants, with brass bells hanging on each side of them, which tingle as they go.

"Next follow men dressed up like giants which go dancing along agreeable to a tradition they have, that anciently there were huge men, that could carry vast burthens, and pull up trees by the roots, &c. After them go a multitude of drummers, and trumpetters and pipers, which make such a great and loud noise, that nothing else besides them can be heard. Then followeth a company of men dancing along, and after these women of such castes or trades as are necessary for the service of the pagoda, as potters and washer-women, each caste goeth in companies by themselves, three and three in a row, holding one another by the hand; and between each company go drummers, pipers and dancers.

"After these comes an elephant with two priests on his back: one whereof is the priest before spoken of carrying the painted stick on his shoulder, who represents Allout neur dio, that is, the god and maker of heaven and earth. The other sits behind

him, holding a round thing like an umbrella over his head, to keep off sun or rain. Then within a yard after him, on each hand of him, follow two other elephants mounted with two other priests, with a priest sitting behind each, holding umbrella's as the former, one of them represents Cotteragan dio, and the other Potting dio. These three gods that reside here in company are accounted of all other the greatest and chiefest, each one having his residence in a several pagoda.

"Behind go their cook-women, with things like whisks in their hands, to scare away flies from them; but very fine as they can make themselves.

"Next after the gods and their attendants, go some thousands of ladies and gentlewomen, such as are of the best sort of the inhabitants of the land, arrayed in the bravest manner that their ability can afford, and so go hand in hand three in a row. At which time all the beauties on Zelone in their bravery do go to attend upon their gods in their progress about the city. Now are the streets also all made clean, and on both sides all along the streets, poles are stuck up with flags and pennons hanging at the top of them, and adorned with boughs and branches of cocoanut trees hanging like fringes, and lighted lamps all along on both sides of the streets, both day and night.

"Last of all, go the commanders sent from the king to see these ceremonies decently performed, with their soldiers after them. And in this manner they ride all round about the city once by day and once by night. This festival lasts from the new moon to the full moon.

"Formerly the king himself in person used to ride on horseback with all his train before him in this solemnity, but now he delights not in these shows.

"Always before the gods set out to take their progress they are set in the pagoda door a good while, that the people may come to worship and bring their offerings unto them: during which time there are dancers, playing and showing many petty tricks of activity before him. To see the which, and also to shew themselves in their bravery, occasions more people to resort thither, than otherwise their zeal and devotion would prompt them to do.

"Two or three days before the full moon, each of these gods

hath a pallenkine carried after them to add unto their honor, in the which there are several pieces of their superstitious relicts, and a silver pot, which just at the hour of full moon they ride out unto a river, and dip full of water, which is carried back with them into the temple, where it is kept till the year after and then flung away. And so the ceremony is ended for that year.

"This festival of the gods taking their progress through the city in the year 1664 the king would not permit to be performed; and that same year the rebellion happened, but never since hath he hindered it.

"At this time they have a superstition, which lasteth six or seven days, too foolish to write: it consists in dancing, singing, and juggling. The reason of which is lest the eyes of the people, or the power of the jaccos, or infernal spirits, might any ways prove prejudicial or noisome to the aforesaid gods in their progress abroad. During the celebration of this great festival, there are no drums allowed to be beaten to any particular gods at any private sacrifice."

Knox is right in his descriptions, but wrong, as might naturally be expected, in some of his explanatory remarks. The attendance of the giants, commemorative of the redoubtable Neela, is another evidence that it is to the reign of Gajābāhu we are to look for the origin of the festival.

In the Ceylon Almanac for 1834, is a "Description of the four principal Kandyan festivals, compiled from materials furnished by a native chief." From this document, we learn, that until the reign of king Kirtisree (A. D. 1747-1780) the Perahara was celebrated exclusively in honour of the four deities, Natha, Vishnu, Katragam, and Pattinee, and altogether unconnected with Budhism. The sacred dalada relic of Budha was first carried in procession, together with the insignia of the four gods, in 1775. The circumstances which gave rise to this innovation were as follows. The Siamese priests who were invited here by king Kirtisree, for the purpose of restoring the Upasampadāwa, the highest order of Budhist ordination, one day hearing the noise of jinjalls, &c. enquired the cause, and were informed that preparations were being made for celebrating a festival in honor of the gods. They took umbrage at this, and observed that they had been made to believe that Budhism was the established

religion of the kingdom, and they had never expected to see Hindooism triumphant in Kandy. To appease them the king sent to assure them that this festival of the Perahara was chiefly intended to glorify the memory of Budha, and to convince them of it, the king gave directions that the great relic should be carried foremost in the procession, dedicating his own howdah for its reception.

There can be little doubt that the Perahara received the countenance of the native princes, rather from a political than a religious motive, though these circumstances would vary with the disposition of the reigning king. It was one of the few occasions upon which the monarch presented himself to the public gaze. The most imposing edifice connected with the palace was the pattrippo, an octagon of two stories, the upper story having a balcony that overlooked the principal square of the royal city, on one side of which was a lake, and on the other various religious and consecrated places. The procession was collected in the square, that the king might see it from the balcony; and when the curtain which shrouded his majesty at his entrance was withdrawn, and the assembly did lowly reverence, amidst the clamor of the drums and pipes,—the sight of the prostrate thousands, the elephants richly comparisoned, the royal guard in proud array, the countless banners floating in the breeze, and the adigars and other chiefs at the head of their respective clans, all arranged in due order and degree, must have produced an effect that is not often equaled even in the festive scenes of far mightier kingdoms. On some occasions the king joined in the procession, but in this there was no uniformity of observance, his majesty being at one time on foot, and at another, we are told, in a golden chariot drawn by eight horses.

The Perahara afforded an excellent opportunity to the king to examine into the state of the provinces, the conduct of the governors, and the obedience of the people. The refractory were punished, the loyal rewarded, and new regulations were now promulgated, that they might be carried to the more distant districts of the island. To the inhabitants generally it must have been a time of grateful festivity, especially during the reigns of the more popular kings, as it was a spectacle of splendour, and the various chiefs were able to exhibit their consequence in the presence of the assembled kingdom.

The Perahara begins on the day of the new moon in the month of æsala, which this year answers to our August. The commencement is regulated by the nekata, or situation of the moon; and at the appointed moment, which must be either in the evening or morning, never at mid-day, the kapurāla of the Vishnu dēwāla cuts down a young jack tree which has been previously chosen, and is consecrated for the purpose by mysterious rites. The day before, the kapurāla must bathe in pure water, anoint his head with the juice of the lime, and clothe himself in clean garments. In ancient times flowers were used, as mentioned by Knox, and these were the flowers of the æhæla, cathantocarpus fistulata, but either because this tree does not now bear flowers in the proper season, or because another tree is more conveniently found, the jack has been substituted in its place, which, however, for the time, receives the name of æhæla. When Knox wrote, the procession was in June; when Davy wrote, in July; it is now in August; and like all other eastern festivals, from the imperfection of the native astronomy, it traverses through all the months of the year. The painted stick of Knox, adorned with flowers, appears to be commemorative of the wonder-working rod of Gajābāhu, and the jack is undoubtedly an innovation. When the tree has been cut down, it is divided into four sections, one of which is conveyed to each of the dēwālas, under a white canopy, and accompanied by music. The section is cleaned at the dēwāla, and put into a hole, after which offerings of cakes are presented, called ganabōdana. The gana are an order of inferior deities attendant upon the gods, and bōdana is the Eloo form of bhōjana, food.

The consecrated wood is adorned with leaves, flowers, and fruit, and during the first five days the procession simply passes round it, the Kapurālas bearing the sacred vessels and implements. After this time they are brought beyond the precincts of the dēwāla, and paraded through the principal streets of Kandy. On the night of the full moon the procession is joined by a relic of Budha, properly accompanied, which is afterwards carried to the Adahana Maluwa, a consecrated place near which are the tombs of the ancient kings and other individuals of the royal race. The maluwa is encircled by stones, within which, it is said, the kings had no jurisdiction; it was a kind of sanctuary.

The relic receives the adoration of the crowd until the morning, when it is returned to the temple.

Towards the end of the festival the procession approaches the river, at the ancient ferry not far from the Peradenia bridge, and whilst the multitude remains upon the bank, the Kapurālas enter a boat that has been splendidly decorated for the occasion. The boat is rowed to some distance, when the Kapurāla takes a golden sword, and strikes the water. At the same instant a brazen vessel is dipped into the river, and whilst the water is yet disparted, a portion is taken up, which is kept until the vessel can be filled in the same manner at the next festival. The water which had been taken the previous year is at the same time poured back into the river.

There is a close analogy between this striking of the river and the striking of the sea by Gajābāhu, though what is meant by the dividing of the waters we cannot tell. It is probable that there was something extraordinary connected with the passage of the king, which tradition afterwards magnified into this miracle. Were we disposed to be fanciful, we might notice the resemblance which the striking of the sea by a rod, the squeezing of water from the dry sand, the errand of the king to demand captives, and some other circumstances, bear to certain facts in the Israelitish exodus, but we have seen so many similar constructions levelled to the ground at a single blow, that we forbear to pursue the parallel.

The general arrangement of the Perahara is the same now as in former times, but in the grandeur of the spectacle there can be no comparison. There are still elephants richly adorned; flags, pennons, and banners; several bands of drums, tomtoms, and pipes; the palanqueens of the gods; the sacred utensils; and the chiefs of the dēwālas, &c. with their separate retinues. The streets are lighted by vessels of oil, placed upon poles, and carried by men, after the manner of the meshals of the Arab tribes. There are several who have a light at each end of the pole, which they whirl round at intervals with some velocity. The din of the tomtoms cannot be better described than in the words of Knox; "they make such a great and loud noise, that nothing else besides them can be heard." The chiefs walk alone, the crowd being kept off by their attendants; the stiffness of

their gait, as they are wrapped round with manifold layers of cloth, being in perfect contrast to their usual ease, indeed we may say gracefulness, of manner. The long whips were cracked before the adigar until the present year, but no one has been appointed to this office since the death of the old man whose presence we now miss, and no other individual is entitled to the honour. The whole procession may extend about a quarter of a mile, but this is only towards its conclusion, as it gradually increases in the number of its attendant elephants, &c., from the commencement. The natives who attend as spectators are now few, even in comparison with recent years, and it would seem that in a little while its interest will vanish away, with many a better remembrance of the olden time. The procession was one day prevented from taking its accustomed round, as a man had hung himself in one of the streets through which it must have passed. The natives are very unwilling to enter into conversation respecting the detail of this ceremony, and say that there are many mysteries connected with it which they cannot reveal.

The history of the Perahara is another evidence how tenaciously the people adhere to the Braminical superstitions, and would tend to prove, that even when Budhism was predominant upon the continent of India, it must have had very little hold upon the mass of the population; and this may account for its almost total destruction after it had once the ability to erect the splendid temples that yet remain, monuments at once of its majesty and its weakness. Budhism is too philosophical, too cold and cheerless, to be a popular creed, and it is only its present alliance with its deadly antagonist of former times that now preserves it in the place it occupies as the national religion of Ceylon.—*The Friend, September* 1839.

THE DONDRA FESTIVAL.

This place was the capital of Ceylon for a short period, during an usurpation in the reign of Sri Sangha Bo 2nd, who reigned in the 7th century; and it is probable that the temple, of which numerous remains are still in existence, was built about the same time. The point of land near which the present village is

situated, forms the extreme south of the island, and is well known to mariners.

The festival takes place at the same time as the Perahara of Kandy, and is under the control of the modliar of the district, who is appointed as Basnaika Nilama by the Government. After the necessary preparations for the procession have been made, the kapurāla of the Vishnu dēwāla commences the ceremony at the first quarter after the new moon, at the appointed nekata, by a rite called kaphitaweema. Six kowilas, or temporary dēwālas, are then erected for the gods Katragama, Natha, Saman, and Alut, and the goddess Pattinee, whose kapuwa is a female, and is called Pattinee Hāmy. All the kapuwas bathe in clean water, and dedicate themselves to the task in the usual manner; but before any offerings are made the tomtom beaters, singers, and dancers, the latter in most grotesque masks, with the principal kapuwas bearing the sacred utensils, parade the streets of the villages. They are careful to return to the dēwāla before the proper nekata. The Basnaika Nilama, by the hand of his servants, makes the first offering at each of the altars. The kapuwa stands at the entrance of the dēwāla as the people present their offerings, anoints their foreheads with a preparation of sandal-wood, and prays for a blessing upon them and their families. This continues 36 hours without any interruption.

The expenses of the ceremony are defrayed from the offerings; but, as I have said, the Basnaika Nilama is appointed by the Government; and on the part of the Government he appoints the kapurālas in turn, receives the money, and divides it, making the Government the conductor of the ceremony. The offerings are divided into 5 portions; the modliar takes two-fifths, and the remainder is divided into 5 portions again; the kapuwas take two-fifths, and the remainder is once more divided into 5 portions; the arachy takes two-fifths, and the remainder is now divided among those who have assisted in preparing the procession, as the washermen, potters, tomtom beaters, &c.

I was present at the Perahara in 1827, when it was computed that about 40,000 persons attended. Some years ago, the popularity of Katragama appearing to be on the decline, the worship of the other deities was introduced, in order to support the waning interests of superstition. The Alut Dewiyo, or new god, is at present one of the most popular. Some say, that he

resided in the Magam Pattoo, a neighbouring province, and died about 60 years ago. A fatal murrain broke out among the cattle at the time of his death, and as he had been a man of austere and eccentric habits, it was supposed to have been caused by his influence. Offerings were made to him to appease his anger, and since that period he has been reckoned among the gods. Others say, that he was a man of Dondra, who having been lost, no one knew how or where, came to his own house in the middle of the night, and told his family that he had become a god: as a proof, they were to take meat into the jungle, and he would come and eat it—an easy method truly of claiming divine honors. "They worship they know not what."

G. Palmer, Printer, 4, Robert-street, Bedford-row, London.